

LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **December 16, 2003, Work Session**

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 5

CONSENT:

REGULAR: **X**

CLOSED SESSION:

(Confidential)

ACTION: **X**

INFORMATION:

ITEM TITLE: **Housing Policy**

RECOMMENDATION: Initiate an effort to create a City Housing Policy so that City Council can make informed decisions about affordable housing – based on data and principles.

SUMMARY: Shortly after the first of the year City Council will start to receive another round of requests to support applications for low-income tax credit projects. In the past, Council has had mixed thoughts about such projects. While some projects have been seen as beneficial to the City, others have been seen as creating difficulties. Decisions about individual projects have been made without the guidance of an overall housing policy and with little time to study and discuss individual projects.

In the past, there have been efforts to create a housing policy. The last attempt was in 1997. Those efforts have failed because no common understanding developed regarding the “facts” (i.e., the # of blighted properties in the City, demand, the origin of tenants, etc.). Without that, no consensus on policy could develop. As a reference, a copy of the draft policy from 1997 is attached.

To be in a better position to consider proposals for projects in the next year and beyond, and to help guide further development and redevelopment efforts in inner City neighborhoods, Council should undertake an effort to develop a housing policy for the City. The policy should be fact-based, proactive, and should articulate Council's principles and priorities regarding affordable housing in the City.

During the work session, staff from the City, Lynchburg Neighborhood Development Foundation (LNDF) and the Lynchburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority (LRHA) will provide an overview of the housing situation in the City. The topics of discussion will include:

1. Demand for affordable housing units in the City.
2. Definition of “affordable” housing
3. Resident make-up: City residents or County transplants
4. The need for a housing database of blighted housing, affordable housing, resident income, etc.

PRIOR ACTION(S): 1997: Draft Housing Policy presented to City Council but not adopted.
1999/2000: Data collection for housing and neighborhoods for Phase 1 of the Comprehensive Plan.
2002: City Council adopted the Comprehensive Plan with Housing/Neighborhood component

FISCAL IMPACT: Unknown at this time.

CONTACT(S): Rachel Flynn 455-3902
Laura Dupuy 846-6964
Ed McCann 845-9011

ATTACHMENT(S): 1997 Draft Housing Policy, Comprehensive Plan Phase I report, Housing/Neighborhood Section of the adopted Comprehensive Plan
(Attachments can be viewed in the Office of the Director of Community Planning & Development, 2nd Floor, City Hall, Lynchburg VA 900 Church Street)

REVIEWED BY: lkp